

# Group Interventions for LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans and Intersex) People using Alcohol & Other Drugs (AOD)

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## What we know



National and international research reports that:

- MSM (Men who have sex with men) more likely to experience issues with recreational drug use than MSW (Stall et. al., 2001)
- LGB communities - statistically significant elevated levels of use (Cochran et. al, 2004)
- Higher use of illicit drugs within the LGBTI population (Ritter et. al., 2012)
- 'Early adopters' (Measham et. al., 2011)
- Highest rates of alcohol use disorders found in lesbians and bi-sexual women (Grella et. al., 2009)
- Perceived stigma and a fear of judgment is a major barrier for LGBTI persons in accessing health services (Sexual Exclusion - Homophobia and health inequalities: a review, 2004)
- Problematic meth use for MSM most effectively addressed in a community setting (Shoptaw et. al., 2005)



## Major drug related harms

- **Sexual health:** including risk of exposure to HIV/STIs, adherence to medications including ARV's and PrEP
- **Physical health:** Impact on immune system, interaction with medication.
- **AOD dependency:** developing problematic levels of use
- **Mental health:** Drug related psychosis, anxiety, depression
- **Financial, housing, employment, relationships and all other risks experience by broader populations**



## What VAC offers

- Specialist 8 week therapeutic group AOD programs
- Evidenced based
- Harm minimization
- Best practice substance interventions
- Ongoing Peer Support Groups (SMART Model)

## What VAC offers



- Current
  - **Drink Limits** – LBQ experiencing issues with alcohol and anxiety
  - **ReWired** – MSM experiencing issues with Methamphetamine use
  - **ReWired 2.0** – Ongoing Peer Support Program (SMART Model)
- Proposed
  - **Transformed** – Trans and gender divers persons experiencing issues with substance use and anxiety
  - **Over the Limit** – MSM experiencing issues with alcohol and anxiety
  - **Youth AOD Specific** – LGBTI youth experiencing issues with substance
  - Expansion of our Peer Lead Support Groups

## Outcomes



- Pre and Post measurements
- Significant reduction in substance use (AUDIT & DUDIT)
- Significant reduction in psychological distress (K10)
- Increase in wellbeing (The Personal Wellbeing Index)
- Shift in attitude towards change (Readiness to Change Questionnaire)

## Conclusion



- Participants stated that accessing an LGBTI community delivered service allowed them to be more open and share without fear of judgement thus helping them achieve their goals
- Program success reinforces the need for specialist programs for vulnerable, minority groups

On behalf of VAC

**Thank you.**

**Questions?**

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